



January 4, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Second Sunday of Christmas,

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

Reverend Maggie Westaby

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CALL TO WORSHIP

In the dark of morning,
the stars still shine.

In the depth of winter,
the birds still climb.

At the start of the year, tender and new,
God is here. God is near.

Do not rest in your fear.
God is here.

So like the stars and the birds,
Let us worship God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Today we stand at the start of a new year, and there is nothing better about a new year than the chance to begin again. That is exactly what we do in the Prayer of Confession. We speak honestly with God and God surrounds us with grace. We are able to begin again. So may we start this new year, this new season, this new week with God's grace. Let us pray. Let us begin again.

Ever-loving God, we long for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy. However, we know that is not how the world works. Even just days after Christmas, we find ourselves face to face with fear once again. So today we pray— forgive us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks. Forgive us when our own fear prevents us from following your call. Forgive us when fear is louder than love. Show us how to turn our fear into action. With hope we pray, amen.

Family of Faith, whether we are brave and courageous or fearful and timid, God's love knows no end. Whether fear inspires us to action, or stops us dead in our tracks, God's love for us is boundless. We are seen. We are surrounded with grace. We are forgiven. We are sent to serve.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Shall We Gather at the River



- 1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
- 2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
- 3 Ere we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - 'ry bur - den down;
- 4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;



with its crys - tal tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

Refrain



Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er;



gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826–1899

Music: HANSON PLACE, Robert Lowry

GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also, with you.

Let us pray...

God of the New Year,

We pray for courage, especially in a world that is rattled with fear. Where uncertainty clouds our vision, steady our hearts. Where change feels overwhelming, remind us that you go before us. Give us courage not born of our own strength, but rooted in your faithfulness and grace. As we step into what is new, help us to trust your leading, to act with compassion, and to hope boldly, knowing that you are already at work, making all things new.

Amen.

READING: Sirach 24:1-6

Wisdom praises herself and tells of her glory in the midst of her people. ² In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory: ³ “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High and covered the earth like a mist. ⁴ I encamped in the heights, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. ⁵ Alone I compassed the vault of heaven and traversed the depths of the abyss. ⁶ Over waves of the sea, over all the earth, and over every people and nation I have held sway.

Word of God Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 65

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.

You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples.

You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.

You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

The pastures of the wilderness overflow; the hills gird themselves with joy.

The meadows clothe themselves with flocks; the valleys deck themselves with grain; they shout and sing together for joy.

READING: Galatians 3:26–28

²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Word of God Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.



GOSPEL: John 1:1-9

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HOLY BAPTISM

Candidates for baptism, sponsors, and parents gather with the minister at the font. The assembly is seated.

God, who is rich in mercy and love, gives us a new birth into a living hope through the sacrament of baptism...

The presiding minister addresses the assembly:

People of God, do you promise to support Remi and pray for her in her new life in Christ?

Response: **We do.**

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The presiding minister addresses sponsors and parents.

The presiding minister addresses sponsors, parents, and assembly.

People of God, do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks & praise...

BAPTISM

PRESENTATION OF CANDLE TO SPONSORS

Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

BAPTISM HYMN

Borning Cry



- 1 "I was there to hear your born-ing cry, I'll be there when you are old.
- 2 "When you heard the won-der of the Word I was there to cheer you on;
- 3 "In the mid-dle a - ges of your life, not too old, no lon - ger young,



I re - joiced the day you were bap-tized to see your life un - fold.
you were raised to praise the liv - ing Lord, to whom you now be - long.
I'll be there to guide you through the night, com-plete what I've be - gun.



I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well;
If you find some-one to share your time and you join your hearts as one,
When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you shut your wea - ry eyes,



in a blaze of light you wan-dered off to find where de-mons dwell."
I'll be there to make your vers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun."
I'll be there as I have al - ways been, with just one more sur - prise."



- 4 "I was there to hear your born-ing cry, I'll be there when you are old.



I re - joiced the day you were bap-tized to see your life un - fold."

Text: John C. Ylvisaker, b. 1937
Music: WATERLIFE, John C. Ylvisaker
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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Sustained by God's abundant mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all of creation. Responding to "God of grace," with "receive our prayer."

PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZEVQ/home>

Give Thanks

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And
now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

Text: Henry Smith

Music: GIVE THANKS, Henry Smith

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Let us offer our gifts today as a response to God's good news of great joy for all people. **FFERING PRAYER**

God of all goodness,

By your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts. May they be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

With-us God, we live in a fragile world. If we're honest, we come to this table today with the taste of uncertainty on our tongues. We come carrying our anxiety. We come asking for guidance. We come filled with all of life's "what-ifs." But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. Instead, you meet us here. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. You give us a new song to sing. As we come to this table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us that even in an uncertain world, you are on the move. Living even here, in the Words that Jesus said.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION & LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever & ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God meets us in the bread and wine, but that is not the only place. God meets us in the night—before the sun rises, before there are answers, before there is closure. God meets us in the light—where joy is effervescent, where laughter is contagious, where icicles shimmer in frigid sunbeams. God meets us in between—in falling snow where sky and earth touch, where winter forests lean into frozen fields, on the edge of faith. This is why good news is louder than fear; God meets us everywhere. Here hope takes on flesh in bread and wine. Come, taste and see this good news, given and shed for you.

LAMB OF GOD (page 154)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.
COMMUNION HYMNS

O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Faithful God,

In this meal you shared with us your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

Go now, beloved of God, washed in the waters of mercy, claimed by Christ forever, and filled with the Spirit's power.

In every step you take, remember:

you are God's own, marked with the cross,
sent to shine with Christ's light in the world God loves.

Our God, who formed you and redeemed you, now sends you,
keeping you in steadfast love—today, tomorrow, and to the end of the age.

In the name of the Father ✠ Son and Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Amen

SENDING HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High



- 1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
- 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
- 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
Music: GLORIA, French carol

DISMISSAL Go in joy. God is at work in you. Thanks be to God.

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Welcome to all! Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones.

To those who are visiting: Welcome to St. John and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex.

Holy Communion is celebrated every Sunday. All are welcome to Christ's Table.

Reminder! If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John (715) 675-6950
If you or a loved one is in the hospital and would like a visit from Pastor Maggie, please contact St. John.

Baptism - Today we celebrate the Baptism of Remi Lou Marczak. She is the daughter of Brigitte McWhorter & Evan Marczak. Remi was born on August 25th, 2025. Remi's sponsors are Desire Breuer & Benjamin Nicholson. May God's blessings be with Remi throughout her life

Food Basket. Each week you are invited to bring non-perishable grocery items to be given to a local food pantry. Place your gift in the *Shopping Cart* next to the main entrance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Noisy offering! The 2nd Sunday of the month! Next Noisy offering: Sunday, January 11th bring your coins (bills also accepted 😊).

Money will be raised and donated quarterly. This noisy offering will go to: *Community Dinners for the Houseless.*

Sunday, January 11 at 10:15 a.m. Town Hall meeting - Meeting to discuss name change.

Monday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. Adult Study will discuss Chapters 9:17 – 14 of the Gospel of Luke.

Monday, January 26th at 6:30 Pastor Maggie's Book Club will discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

Kwik Trip Gift Cards Sign-up in the Fellowship Hall or on our website! Help support St. John when buying groceries, gas, or getting your car washed at Kwik Trip!
<https://stjohnwausau.org/fundraising/>

Church Mailboxes have moved – The mailboxes are now in order numerically by envelope number, though your name is also listed alongside your number. There are

master lists in red binders, listed alphabetically by last name. Our mailbox section only accommodates 240 slots. We have set up a temporary location by the side door of the narthex. If you do not see your name or see errors, please let us know. **We have also changed our envelope system. If you are looking for offering envelopes, please fill out the pink offering envelope form and place it in the office door mailbox.

Live Streaming and Photography Notice. When you enter a St. John Lutheran Church service or event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording or live streaming may occur. If you prefer not to be recognized on camera, the back row inside the church is not within viewing distance of a camera and communion will typically be only on a wide shot where it may be difficult to recognize congregants. Parents, please note our children's sermons are being recorded and live streamed. If you do not want your child to be recognized on camera, please refrain from having them participate.

Coming This Week @ St. John January 4th – January 11th

Today - Sunday, January 4th

9:00 a.m. Worship / No Sunday School

11:30 a.m. Bell Practice

Tuesday, January 6th

6:00 p.m. Council Meeting

Wednesday, January 7th

8:30 a.m. Quilters Meet

6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class

Thursday, January 8th

5:30 p.m. Bells Practice – come try the bells! No experience needed.

Sunday, January 11th

9:00 a.m. Worship / No Sunday School

10:15 a.m. Church Town Hall – Name Vote